

# IOWA BIRD LIFE

---

Spring 1986

Volume 56

Number 2



IOWA ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION

## CONTENTS

---

MEET I.O.U. PRESIDENT CARL J. BENDORF 33

*Thomas H. Kent*

BIRDING WILLOW SLOUGH 35

*Barbara L. Wilson*

A BIG DAY IN EASTERN IOWA 37

*Carl J. Bendorf*

REPORT OF RECORDS COMMITTEE FOR 1985 43

*Thomas H. Kent*

OFFICIAL CHECKLIST OF IOWA BIRDS 1986 EDITION 46

*I.O.U. Records Committee*

FIELD REPORTS—WINTER 1985–1986 56

*W. Ross Silcock*

RED-THROATED LOON AT SAYLORVILLE RESERVOIR 62

*Steve Dinsmore*

RED-NECKED GREBES IN CENTRAL IOWA 63

*Steve Dinsmore*

RED KNOT IN POLK COUNTY 63

*Steve Dinsmore*

RUFF IN STORY COUNTY 64

*Paul Martsching*

---

FRONT COVER: Piping Plover at Nesting Area Near Salix, Woodbury County,  
8 June 1985. Photo by Randall D. Williams.

INSIDE BACK COVER: Editorial Staff, Subscription/Membership Information,  
Instructions to Authors, Officers, Board of Directors, Standing Committees

BACK COVER: Meeting Dates, Field Report Deadlines, Birdline, Materials Available.

---

Copyright © 1986 Iowa Ornithologists' Union

The IOWA ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION, founded in 1923, encourages interest in the identification, study, and protection of birds in Iowa and seeks to unite those who have these interests in common. *IOWA BIRD LIFE* and *I.O.U. NEWS* are quarterly publications of the Union.

---

#### EDITORIAL STAFF OF *IOWA BIRD LIFE*

Thomas H. Kent, Editor, 211 Richards St., Iowa City, IA 52240

James P. Sandrock, Associate Editor, 1634 Morningside Dr., Iowa City, IA 52240

Carl J. Bendorf, Circulation Manager and Fall Field Reports Editor, 825 7th Ave., Iowa City, IA 52240

W. Ross Silcock, Christmas Bird Count and Winter Field Reports Editor, Box 300, Tabor, IA 51653

Robert K. Myers, Spring Field Reports Editor, RR2 Box 153, Perry, IA 50220

James J. Dinsmore, Summer Field Reports Editor, 4024 Arkansas Dr., Ames, IA 50010

**SUBSCRIPTION/MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION:** Institutions may subscribe to *Iowa Bird Life* for \$12 per year. Individuals may join the Iowa Ornithologists' Union according to the following membership classes: Regular (\$12); Regular as spouse or minor child of another Regular member without publications (\$4 first additional family member, \$2 each additional family member); Contributing (\$12 plus any additional tax-deductible contribution to the IOU); and Life (\$250 as single payment or \$62.50 for each of four years). Members but not subscribers will also receive the quarterly *I.O.U. NEWS* and are eligible to vote and hold office in the Union. Send subscriptions, membership payments, or address changes to Hank Zaletel, Treasurer, 715 West St., Colo, IA 50056.

**INSTRUCTIONS TO AUTHORS:** Original manuscripts, notes, letters (indicate if for publication), editorials, and other materials relating to birds and bird finding in Iowa should be sent to the editor. Accepted manuscripts will generally be published promptly, depending on space available, with the following absolute deadlines: 15 November for the Winter issue; 15 February for the Spring issue; 15 May for the Summer issue; and 15 July for the Fall issue. Most manuscripts will be refereed. All material should be typed double-spaced or hand-printed in ink on 8½ by 11 inch paper. Authors should pattern their style after a current issue of the journal. If you want more detailed guidelines or advice regarding the appropriateness of your topic for *Iowa Bird Life*, send a self-addressed stamped envelope to the editor.

#### OFFICERS OF THE IOWA ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION

Carl J. Bendorf, President (1987), 825 7th Ave., Iowa City, IA 52240

James J. Dinsmore, Vice-President (1987), 4024 Arkansas Dr., Ames, IA 50010

Francis L. Moore, Secretary (1986), 336 Fairfield St., Waterloo, IA 50703

Hank Zaletel, Treasurer (1986), 715 West St., Colo, IA 50056

Other members of the Board of Directors: Ray Cummins, Phyllis Harris, Bob Myers, Beth Proescholdt, and Ross Silcock

#### STANDING COMMITTEES

**Publications:** James J. Dinsmore (chair), Robert Cecil, Peter C. Petersen, Nancy Slife, Linda Zaletel.

**Records:** Thomas H. Kent (secretary), James J. Dinsmore, Francis L. Moore, Robert K. Myers, Peter C. Petersen, W. Ross Silcock, Barbara L. Wilson.

**Membership:** Francis Moore (chair), Bernie Knight, Jim Sinclair



## UPCOMING MEETINGS OF IOWA ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION

May 17-18, 1986, Springbrook State Park

September 5-7, 1986, Waterloo

**FIELD REPORTS:** Anyone observing birds in Iowa is encouraged to report their findings on a quarterly basis to the Field Reports editors. Sample reporting and documentation forms suitable for duplication are available from the editor (send self-addressed stamped envelope to T. H. Kent, 211 Richards St., Iowa City, IA 52240). An article describing the reporting process is also available.

Deadlines for receipt of field reports are as follows:

Winter (Dec, Jan, Feb)—3 March (W. Ross Silcock, Box 300, Tabor, IA 51653)

Spring (Mar, Apr, May)—3 June (Robert K. Myers, RR2 Box 153, Perry, IA 50220)

Summer (Jun, Jul)—3 August (James J. Dinsmore, 4024 Arkansas Dr., Ames, IA 50010)

Fall (Aug, Sep, Oct, Nov)—3 December (Carl J. Bendorf, 825 7th Ave, Iowa City, IA 52240)

## CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

Deadline for receipt of reports: 15 January

For forms and instructions write: W. Ross Silcock, Box 300, Tabor, IA 51653.

## IOWA BIRDLINE 319-622-3353

The birdline is a two to three minute recorded summary of interesting recent bird sightings in Iowa. At the end of the report you can leave a message and report your recent sightings. Be sure to give your name and phone number as well as the location of the bird and date seen. Call in as soon as possible after sighting a rare bird. Carl Bendorf checks the reports daily and updates the recording on Monday, so make sure Sunday sightings are reported by Sunday night.

## I.O.U. NEWS

Send items of interest for the newsletter to the editors (J. Hank and Linda Zaletel, 715 West St., Colo, IA 50056).

## MATERIALS AVAILABLE

Back issues of *Iowa Bird Life*—send self-addressed stamped envelope to the Editor of Iowa Bird Life for order form.

## REPORTING NEBRASKA BIRDS

Sightings of Nebraska birds, including those within the Nebraska portion of DeSoto NWR, should be reported to Loren and Babs Padelford, 1405 Little John Road, Bellevue, NE 68005. Formats for reporting and documentation are the same as for Iowa.

## MEET I.O.U. PRESIDENT CARL J. BENDORF

THOMAS H. KENT

Encouraged by his parents, Carl started watching birds in 1966 at age 12. Armed with binoculars and a Chester Reed guide to land birds, he bicycled with a friend around the Amana Colonies looking for birds and recording them with an inexpensive parabolic reflector. After two years, his interest turned to sports. His attraction to ornithology lay dormant until 1975, when, during final exam week of his junior year in college, he suddenly felt the urge to chase birds again. That summer, without influence from others, he started a life list. In the following fall, he ran across a copy of *Iowa Bird Life* in the library and sent in his membership fee. It was from *Iowa Bird Life* that he learned of Iowa City birders and made contact with them.

Carl was born a native of Amana on 27 January 1954. Since graduation from the University of Iowa with a B.A. degree in Philosophy in 1976, he has been clock service manager at the Amana Furniture Shop. Carl lives in Iowa City with his wife, Linda, a former school teacher and now a second year law student. Their 18-month-old daughter, Analiese, already can recognize an owl and is now working on confusing fall warblers.

Aided by his friendly, outgoing manner and keen birding skills, Carl rapidly became involved in birding activities in the Iowa City area. His annual midwinter turkey walk in the Amana woods (followed by a bountiful family style breakfast at a local restaurant) and his founding of a local newsletter, the *Eastern Iowa Birdwatch*, have made him well known to local birders.



A major birding expedition to Arizona in 1981 with Tom Kent and then I.O.U. President Ross Silcock fueled his growing interest in birds and led to his appointment later that year as membership chairman of the I.O.U. Carl rapidly became familiar with the I.O.U. and its members. In 1983 he was elected Vice President of the I.O.U. and in 1985 he became President. Major activities within the organization include helping Rick Hollis set up the Iowa Birdline (housed in Carl's mother's gift shop in Amana), computerizing the I.O.U. membership list, planning the program for four annual meetings, and serving on the I.O.U. Review and Constitution committees. He has coauthored two Field Reports and now serves as the fall season editor. He is a member of the staff of *Iowa Bird Life*, serving as circulation manager, and he has recently been appointed to the Records Committee.

Having birded with Carl since the Christmas Bird Count of 1978, I can appreciate why such a young man has so rapidly become involved in birding and birding organizations. He learns bird identification quickly through careful research, observation, and a good ear for bird songs. He likes other birders and interacts with them freely, whether they are young or old, novice or national expert. His technical skills with optical and sound equipment, cameras, and computers have been of great aid to his birding activities. He has birded the state of Iowa, where he has seen 303 species. Birding trips to Florida, Arizona, Colorado, Minnesota, and California have pushed his North American list to 536, with more to be added this spring in Alaska. Carl's most frequent birding companions in and out of the state have been Tom Kent, Tom Staudt, and Ross Silcock.

Carl believes that the major changes that are occurring in the Iowa Ornithologists' Union—expansion of membership, more organized meetings, standing committees involving many members, and expanded publications—had their genesis in the I.O.U. Review Committee that was formed by President Silcock in 1982 and chaired by Jim Sandrock. The survey of the membership carried out by that committee led to a new constitution and expanded activities, many of which have occurred during Carl's tenure as Vice President and President. Carl hopes that all amateur and professional ornithologists will join and promote the activities of the Union.

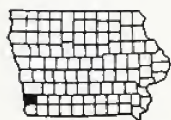
Carl's personal goals are to see all of Iowa's regular and casual species, as well as those accidentals that he has time to chase. His real attraction to birding, however, is improving his identification skills and knowledge of bird distribution. He finds gulls and shorebirds particularly challenging. He also plans to do more research and writing about Iowa birds.

*211 Richards St., Iowa City, IA 52240*



# BIRDING WILLOW SLOUGH

BARBARA L. WILSON



Willow Slough is a 329-acre, state-owned Public Hunting Area in Mills County that was created by diking two small creeks just before they enter the West Nishnabotna River. There are no facilities, not even a picnic table, and hunters abound in season.

As a birding area Willow Slough is a "good news—bad news" situation. The good news is that you can see almost any of the water birds and hawks found in Iowa. The bad news is that it would take many trips to see all of them, because the habitat fluctuates greatly with changing water levels. The water supply is unreliable at best. In wet years a moderately sized, extremely fertile marsh is formed; in dry years it is replaced by mud flats. Occasionally the slough becomes completely dry. Decomposition of dead plant material on the marsh bottom during the dry periods releases the nutrients that feed large populations of fish and arthropods, which, in turn, attract birds in wet periods.

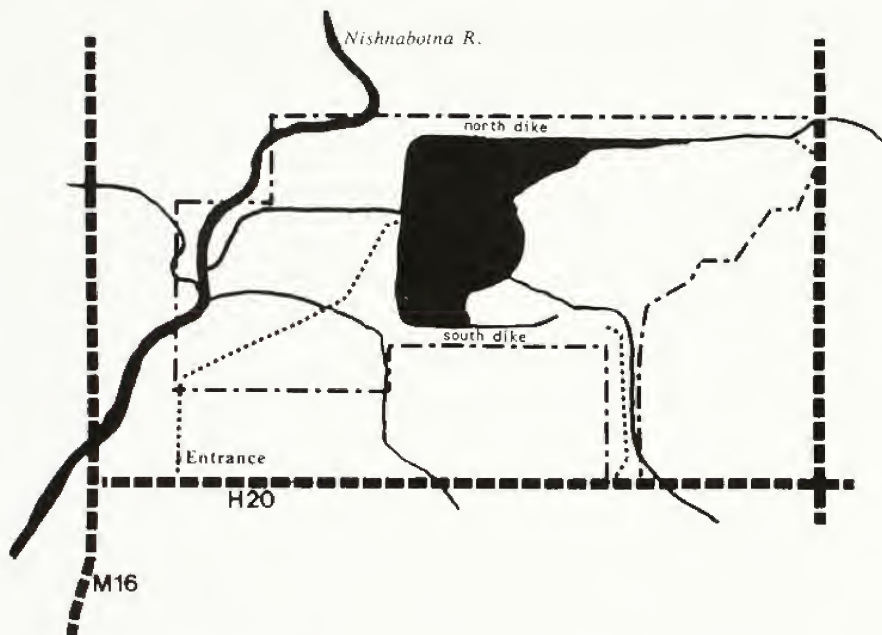
Other habitats within the area include old fields, much brush, hedgerows, planted stands of switch grass, and a few cultivated fields. A fine, old, closed-canopy cottonwood forest, located just north of the entrance road, is best birded in spring, before troublesome nettles grow.

Some of the more interesting regular migrants birds include large flocks of American White Pelicans, Snow Geese, and White-fronted Geese. I enjoy the fall concentration of Pied-billed Grebes. Willow Slough is also a good place to look for Eared Grebe. When the water is low, large numbers of shorebirds visit, including Baird's Sandpiper. The brushy habitat attracts warblers and sparrows in season, and American Redstart, Bell's Vireo, and Willow Flycatcher breed. Yellow-breasted Chat and Blue Grosbeak have bred at the slough but cannot be found every year. The many pheasants that live here are protected from hunters by the dense cover.

Rare species that have been encountered include White-faced Ibis, Ross' Goose, Oldsquaw, White-winged Scoter, Black Scoter, Golden Eagle, Merlin, Peregrine Falcon, Common Moorhen, Sandhill Crane, Piping Plover, Whimbrel, Marbled Godwit, Least Tern, and Pileated Woodpecker.

To reach the marsh, go east on Highway 34 for one mile past the Hastings turn-off, then north for 4 miles on M16 (a blacktopped road). Just before reaching the green metal bridge that crosses the Nishnabotna, turn east on H20, a gravel road. Go about one-quarter mile east to the slough entrance on the north side of the road. (Each year the Conservation Commission erects a large sign here, but it is regularly stolen.)

To bird the slough, drive in at the main entrance and continue to the spillway. In good weather it is best to park below the dike and walk up to avoid flushing birds that are close, but many birders prefer to park on the dike itself where the whole water area can be scoped repeatedly from the car window. Viewing is best in the afternoon when the sun is in the west. The near water is up to six feet deep; on the far, shallow edge birds often move in and out of the cattails. After thoroughly scanning the open water, and mud flats, if present, you can move along the dike or follow trails into the brushy areas and woods to the west. At dawn or dusk American Woodcock can be heard along the entrance road.



There are two other roads by which you may enter the area. The center road runs north from H20 starting about three-quarters of a mile east of the main entrance. This road leads to dense thickets of honey locust and willow trees. You can reach the east end of the south dike from here—but usually not with dry feet.

The third entrance provides access to the marsh from the east. This approach takes advantage of morning light but involves a lot of walking. This entrance is two miles east of M16 and one mile north of H20 on another gravel road. Look for a short driveway on the west side of the road that is located between a cultivated field and several large bushes. From here you may walk south of the stream into the brush and young forest on the east side of the marsh. It is easier, however, to walk back to the road, cross the ditch, and proceed west on the dike. Before eventually reaching the marsh, you will pass by old fields and willow thickets.

*RR 2, Box 41, Hastings, IA 51540*



# A BIG DAY IN EASTERN IOWA

CARL J. BENDORF

Why is the annual Big Day attempt one of the highlights of my birding year? It's a marvelous way to experience the full rush of spring migration in a challenging and fun day with my regular birding companions. Trying to find a maximum number of species in 24 hours requires that we test and improve our knowledge of all bird habits and habitats and that we be able to identify every glimpsed form and each faint chip and song.

I have done at least one Big Day each May for the last six years, usually with Tom Kent and Tom Staudt of Iowa City. We have been joined frequently by Ross Silcock of Tabor or by Pete Petersen of Davenport. This past year I decided to dictate notes throughout our most recent Big Day in 1985 in order to record our experiences. The following are excerpts from these notes.

13 May 7:20 p.m.: I've packed enough sandwiches and apples to eat for a week, and, if all goes as usual, I'll bring half of them back home tomorrow at the end of the day. I always feel a sense of adventure before a Big Day; I realize that much of the fun in any birding trip is in the planning. This is part of the appeal of doing a Big Day, because a successful one involves much careful preparation. Timing is everything; the perfect day must be chosen in advance, and the day's schedule is precisely studied and plotted. Ideally, the chosen day would combine good water levels for shorebirds and a variety of lingering waterfowl, and a weather pattern that produces a fallout of migrant passerines. Furthermore, we must pick a day when we can all get off work. Predicting all these factors in advance is almost impossible, so we usually just pick a day in mid-May and hope we get lucky.

The second step in planning is to refine the route of travel in order to achieve maximum coverage of a variety of the best habitats, while minimizing travel and other less productive time. We usually adjust the route and schedule from year to year, depending on the progress of migration and the water and weather conditions. For example, April of this year has been extremely warm and dry, and this has affected our planning. Many of our traditional water areas are dried up, and others are at low levels. Another effect of the unusually warm weather is that the foliage is much advanced this year, and it will be much more difficult to see passerines.

We always try to scout the area prior to the chosen date. Last week Tom Kent went to Muskrat Slough and found it to be extremely dry with poor habitat for rails. On the other hand, Cone Marsh was quite low and could be a good shorebird spot this year. There will be no flooded fields for shorebirds this year, so they may concentrate at the Coralville Reservoir. Tom Staudt saw thousands of shorebirds at the Sand Point area yesterday. As the appointed day approaches, many of the expected species are showing up around the state. Our biggest concern is the apparent lack of lingering waterfowl.

We will again be following the Big Day rules established by the American Birding Association. In general, the idea is to identify as many different species of birds as possible in one calendar day. We must remain together as a group at all times and cannot receive help during the day from anyone. Any geographic area can be covered and any means of transportation used. The ABA requires that teams consist of at least two persons and that, to be eligible for a record, at least 95 percent of the day's

list be seen by all of the team members. To this we have added our own rule that any species must be identified by at least two of us in order to be counted. I hope that tomorrow we will each see every bird.

14 May 12:10 a.m.: As I toss restlessly in bed, a steady light rain is falling, and I wish I had gone to bed earlier. Since I'm too excited to sleep deeply, it wouldn't have mattered anyway. As I drift in and out of sleep I keep having visions of birds instead of raindrops dripping from the trees.

2:40 a.m.: As I quietly sneak out of the house the rain has stopped. It is quite breezy; the temperature is perhaps 60 degrees. I have just picked up Tom Staudt and we are headed through downtown Iowa City toward Kent's, trying to listen for a Common Nighthawk. We will all three try to get this species, but just in case we miss it or run out of time later, we two will squeeze one in now for insurance. This year Staudt sees one before we hear one; usually it's the other way around. Is this a good omen?

2:53 a.m.: We arrive at Kent's, and, after five minutes of deliberation on the proper raingear to carry, he climbs into the car, fully loaded down with food and equipment and already one species behind.

3 a.m.: A light tap on the pole brings a rude awakening to several Purple Martins in a nest house on the Coralville strip. We see and hear several more nighthawks (to Kent's great relief).

3:25 a.m.: We spend 15 minutes listening in vain for an Eastern Screech-Owl at a "guaranteed" spot along Interstate 80 near Tiffin. For the owls and some of the other night birds we sparingly use a recorded call to try to evoke a response, but the traffic and wind noise make hearing difficult, and we have no success.

3:35 a.m.: We get a rather quick answer to the screech owl tape at our usual spot near Williams Prairie. We hear the low, trilling call, and now our list is up to 3.

3:45 a.m.: At Williams Prairie we miss all of our target birds: Barred and Great Horned Owls, Whip-poor-will, and American Woodcock. We hear two of the common species that often sing during the night: Northern Cardinal and Song Sparrow.

4:15 a.m.: As we head west on gravel roads, we occasionally stop to try our tapes. No owls, but at one spot we apparently park right next to a Whip-poor-will, for he immediately drowns out our tape recorder with his own rendition of the monotonous call.

4:40 a.m.: We take a wild stab at finding a Chuck-will's-widow in the sandy hills east of Marengo. None has ever been reported here, but it doesn't hurt to try.

5:10 a.m.: We arrive at Otter Creek Marsh with high hopes. We have already gone 70 miles and the light is just beginning to show. Part of the secret of a Big Day is to try to do as much as possible of the required driving before or after dark or during the middle of the day, when birding is usually less productive. It's amazing how many miles one can travel in the early morning with no traffic on the roads and adrenaline coursing through the veins.

5:40 a.m.: Not much luck so far at this important stop—the first major water area and best marsh area of the route. Warbling Vireo, American Redstart, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Canada Goose, but still no owls or the woodcock.

7:30 a.m.: In walking the north dike we find Black-crowned Night-Heron, Great Blue Heron, Osprey, Wood Duck, Sora, Least-, Semipalmated-, and Pectoral Sandpipers, but we do not find any of the more interesting rails, and we also miss the Least Bittern. Missing these birds and the lack of lingering waterfowl certainly put us behind on any kind of assault on the Big Day record. No grebes, gulls, terns, or



egrets; it's looking a bit grim. Our total is only 55 species, and we are already wondering if we should have gone to Cone Marsh first.

9:05 a.m.: We are on the road behind East Amana, and we have had pretty good luck in finding almost all of our target birds for this spot, including Orchard Oriole, Savannah Sparrow, Red-tailed Hawk, Turkey Vulture, and Eastern Bluebird. I saw a Belted Kingfisher fly up the creek, but we can't count it because Kent and Staudt missed it. We have added 17 species since leaving Otter Creek Marsh, but 72 is a sub-par total for this time of the day. The weather has altered our strategy a bit. Because of the overcast skies, we have not felt pressed to get to the woods for warblers. We usually look for warblers between 7 and 9 a.m., but it will be as good now as it was an hour ago (we hope!). We've driven 107 miles so far.



*Looking for warblers in the Amana woods.*

11 a.m.: We are now leaving the Amana Woods. We had excellent luck with the resident birds, but none at all with migrant warblers. Up the first ravine on the west end of the woods we found the expected Worm-eating Warbler, Louisiana Waterthrush, and Acadian Flycatcher, plus a bonus bird, the Hooded Warbler. We also found Chestnut-sided Warbler, Least Flycatcher, Kentucky Warbler, but little else. We missed hearing the Cerulean Warbler, a common breeding bird in the Amana Woods. The other resident specialties were found so quickly that we had extra time for migrants, but they just weren't there. We tallied 23 new species in the last two hours, bringing the total to 95. This is where we would hope to be by 8 a.m.! There are a lot of big holes in the list so far—still no grebes, bitterns, egrets, and only four waterfowl.

Kent has studied the results of past Big Days and assigned a difficulty code to each species, based on how many times it has been found on previous Big Day attempts. On the past 12 Big Days (including this attempt), a total of 211 different species have been recorded. Birds seen at least 10 out of 12 days are designated as Code 1. There



are 102 such species, and we can reasonably expect to see every one of them. Forty-five species have been recorded on 6 to 9 trips (Code 2), and we need to make a special effort to look in the right habitats to add these to the list. The third category of species (Code 3) are those that have been found on 5 or fewer Big Days. These 64 species are either rare or hard to find and are not to be expected. When one of these birds pops up into view we are entitled to let out a little shout and clap one another on the back. These are also the birds that make or break an attempt on a Big Day record.

So far today we have missed 22 Code 1 birds, but have seen 10 Code 2 and 10 Code 3 species.

11:30 a.m. Upland Sandpiper is a relatively common bird in Iowa, but it is always difficult to find. We have one reliable spot on our route, but this year we don't find the bird. However, as we were scanning the pastureland, a Northern Mockingbird flies into a small tree. This bonus bird makes up for the missed sandpiper.

1:05 p.m.: We see very little at Swan Lake. Out at nearby Sand Point, the numbers of shorebirds (compared to recent days) is down, but there is a nice selection. It is now mostly sunny and getting quite warm, but still windy. Among the species we add here are Double-crested Cormorant, Great Egret, a female Red-breasted Merganser (a surprise this late), Ring-billed Gull, Horned Lark, and some good shore birds: Black-bellied Plover, Hudsonian Godwit, Ruddy Turnstone, Dunlin, Stilt Sandpiper, White-rumped Sandpiper, and a Short-billed Dowitcher. We now have 15 species of shorebirds, which is good for a Big Day, but only 12 warblers. This is about half of the expected Big Day warbler total. Maybe the wind will blow some our way.

1:45 p.m.: We stop in the little wooded area on the road to Sand Point and add 6 badly needed species. We are now up to 115 species, far off a record pace. But we do get several Code 1 species: White-throated Sparrow, Gray-cheeked Thrush, Magnolia, Nashville, and Blackpoll Warblers, and Solitary Vireo.

3:30 p.m.: We check Round Lake but find little in the way of lingering waterfowl. Along a dirt road south of Williams Prairie we hear Bell's Vireo and a Field Sparrow. In the nearby Greencastle Corner area we find Eastern Phoebe and Lark Sparrow.

3:35 p.m.: Back to the Upland Sandpiper area again. This spot has been very reliable in recent years, but not this time. Our total is up to 123 species, and we are heading for the Amana Woods, hoping for better luck with migrant warblers—where are they this year?

4 p.m.: We find a few new birds in the Amana Woods: White-crowned Sparrow, Black and White and Mourning Warblers, and another singing Hooded Warbler.

4:20 p.m.: Our beautiful sunny skies have turned into a pounding rainstorm, so we sit in the car and ponder the missing checkmarks on our list.

4:40 p.m.: The rain continues and we have reached that time in every Big Day when you start driving around hoping for just one or two new birds to appear. We wonder if this passing storm might induce some new species to come out of hiding. Where are all the ducks that were at Sand Point all week?

4:45 p.m.: Sure enough, our persistence (stubbornness?) pays off, and we locate (stumble upon?) two Vesper Sparrows along the roadside.

Thoughts on the day so far: we really didn't expect to be able to challenge the record; we just wanted to do our best and have fun. The day began with success, but Otter Creek was a big disappointment for water birds. We also didn't think we would hit any warbler waves, but this day there weren't even any ripples. Considering all that, we have done pretty well.



*Looking for shorebirds at Sand Point.*

5:30 p.m.: We're glad we made a return visit to Sand Point. After the storm passed, the afternoon sun came out and created a dramatic scene as it highlighted the shorebirds against a background of receding dark clouds. We didn't see any new shorebirds, but the numbers had increased. We did pick up some of the waterfowl that were hidden earlier, such as Gadwall and Green-winged Teal. This was followed by a bit of excitement—a false alarm on a Merlin (just a fat Tree Swallow), followed immediately by a genuine large falcon. It swooped in low and very fast and must have been the Peregrine reported here earlier in the week, but we did not see it well enough to count it. As we scanned for a return of the falcon, Staudt noticed an immature Bald Eagle perched in a distant dead tree. This is the first time for this species on one of our Big Days. Bald Eagles are usually long gone by mid-May. Our total is now 132.

6:15 p.m.: We go next to the Jolly Roger access to the Coralville Reservoir. This is the widest spot of the lake, and, as we hoped, there were several Caspian Terns, along with Great Egrets and more Ring-billed Gulls. Just as we are driving out, we see three birds in a bush: two Field Sparrows and a Lincoln's Sparrow.

6:55 p.m.: We have been birding now for 16 hours straight. We've driven 180 some miles and walked several more. After assessing our energy levels and fatigue factors, we decide to make one last stop at Hickory Hill Park, a spot not usually on our Big Day route. We'll bird there until it gets dark or until we fall asleep.

8:15 p.m.: We're ready to call it a day. We had better than expected fortune in the park, finding Wilson's Warbler and getting several glimpses of and then hearing a Yellow-bellied Flycatcher. As we were walking through the woods, we glimpsed several birds soaring overhead. One of us yelled out, "Falcon!" We raced ahead to a clearing and watched two birds circle out of sight to the north. We quickly discussed the possibilities and the features observed and reached the conclusion that these might have been Mississippi Kites. We were elated and yet disappointed that we had



not seen them better. Suddenly another one was overhead and then three more. Our hearts sank as we quickly realized how badly fooled we had been by Common Nighthawks (remember what the first species of the day had been). This was conclusive proof that after 18 hours and 203 miles, we had reached the end of our effectiveness for the day as bird finders. As we wearily climbed into the car (for the hundredth time today, it seemed) a Hairy Woodpecker gave his distinctive call note to become the last tallied species for the day.

Our final total was 137 species, 17 birds short of the Iowa record of 154 set last year on this same route. Where did we fall short? By dividing the checklist into basic species groups (Table 1), we can get a better comparison with our previous 11 eastern Iowa Big Days, done from 1977 through 1984 (more than one count was done during some years). These basic groups are only about one-half of a Big Day total, but they can serve as an indicator of success.

Table 1. Number of Species Recorded by Group

<u>Species Group</u>	<u>1984 Record</u>		<u>1985 Count</u>
	<u>Average</u>	<u>Count (154)</u>	<u>(137)</u>
Loons to Herons	6.5	9 (+2.5)	5 (-1.5)
Waterfowl	10.2	12 (+1.8)	7 (-2.8)
Hawks	3.1	4 (+0.9)	4 (+0.9)
Rails, Coots	2.9	4 (+1.1)	2 (-0.9)
Shorebirds	15.0	17 (+2.0)	16 (+1.0)
Gulls, Terns	3.7	5 (+1.3)	2 (-1.7)
Flycatchers	4.7	6 (+1.3)	8 (+3.3)
Warblers	23.0	25 (+2.0)	19 (-4.0)
Sparrows	10.8	11 (+0.2)	11 (+0.2)
Totals	79.9	93 (+13.1)	74 (-5.4)

The record Big Day of 14 May 1984 was above average in each major species category, and, exactly one year later, we were slightly above average in four categories and below average in the other five, particularly the warblers. Overall, we recorded 94 of 102 possible Code 1 birds, 27 of 45 possible Code 2s, and 16 of 64 possible Code 3s. Our total of 137 was just below the 12 trip average of 139.5.

The lack of a record did not make our Big Day any less enjoyable. Not in the least! No two attempts are ever the same, and each year has high and low points. The fun is in the fellowship and the challenge. I can hardly wait until next year to try it again.

*825 7th Ave., Iowa City, IA 52240*



# REPORT OF RECORDS COMMITTEE FOR 1985

THOMAS H. KENT

The Records Committee reviewed 3 old records and 26 records from 1985. None of the old records was accepted; two were re-reviews, and one of these was of a previously accepted record. Of the 1985 records, 13 were accepted, 12 were not accepted, and 1 is still under review. The specific results are presented below.

The committee recommended new bylaws to conform to the new I.O.U. constitution and these were accepted by the Board of Directors; they do not change the operation of the committee.

The committee reviewed the status of all species and produced a new edition of the *Official Checklist of Iowa Birds*. The new list follows this report. Changes in the official list are given below.

The term of James J. Dinsmore (completion of Darwin Koenig's term) expires in 1986; it will be filled by Francis L. Moore. Joseph P. Schaufenbuel resigned from the committee; the remaining year of his term will be filled by Carl J. Bendorf. Current committee members and the year their terms expire are: Bendorf (1987), Barbara L. Wilson (1988), Peter C. Petersen (1989), W. Ross Silcock (1990), Robert K. Myers (1991), Moore (1992), and Thomas H. Kent, Secretary (appointed by other members).

## OLD RECORDS REVIEWED

**Mississippi Kite:** A report from 1983 was suggestive of this species but not considered to be beyond doubt.

**Laughing Gull:** The only previously accepted record from 26 Mar 1977 (*IBL* 47:64) was re-reviewed in light of recent information on distinguishing first year Franklin's Gull from Laughing Gull. The main field mark used in the identification—lack of white separating the dark wing tip—could also occur on a first-spring Franklin's Gull.

**Iceland Gull:** A record from 15 Dec 1974 and 28 Jan 1975 (*IBL* 45:23) was split into two records and re-reviewed. Neither record was judged to be beyond doubt.

## 1985 RECORDS ACCEPTED

**Red-throated Loon:** 1 on 30 Nov 1985 at Saylorville Res. (*IBL* 55:121). A small loon with upturned bill was seen by two observers.

**Clark's Grebe:** 1 at Big Creek L. on 12 Oct and presumably the same bird at Saylorville Res. on 13 Oct 1985 (*IBL* 55:121, 56:31). The white extending above the eye was seen.

**Eider sp.:** 2 at DeSoto NWR from 11 to 24 Nov 1986 (*IBL* 55:123). Photographs of the two birds are still under review by the committee and outside experts.

**Red Knot:** 1 at Fisher L., Polk Co., on 9 Sep 1986 (*IBL* 55:125). A juvenile was well described by several observers.

**Curlew Sandpiper:** 1 at Nashua, Chickasaw Co., on 10 May 1985 (*IBL* 55:64, 72). A bird in breeding plumage was photographed.

**Parasitic Jaeger:** 1 immature at Saylorville Res. from 13 to 17 Oct 1985 (*IBL* 55:125, 56:31). Identification was based on size, behavior, and lack of white in wing coverts.

**Thayer's Gull:** 1 first-year bird at Red Rock Res. from 10 to 14 Dec 1985 (see Field Reports). The silvery primaries and secondaries on the underwing surface, as well as other features, were well described and photographed.

**Black-backed Woodpecker:** 1 male near Ottumwa on 28 Dec 1985 (*IBL* 56:19, 30). The bird was well described and photographed.

- Black-billed Magpie:** 1 in northwest Lyon Co. on 6 Oct 1985 (*IBL* 55:127, 56:32). The description presented no identification problems.
- Sage Thrasher:** 1 in Waterloo from 23 Sep to 13 Oct 1986 (*IBL* 55:128, 56:28-29). This bird was seen and photographed by many.
- Black-headed Grosbeak:** 1 male at Coralville Res. on 13 May 1985 (*IBL* 55:69). The bird was seen briefly by one observer, but the field marks seen were judged sufficient for identification.
- Chestnut-collared Longspur:** 2 males near Hendrickson M. on 20 Mar 1985 (*IBL* 55:70). The birds were studied with Lapland Longspurs.
- House Finch:** 1 female at Iowa City on 26 Mar 1986 (*IBL* 55:70) was photographed. A male at Burlington on 12 Apr 1985 (*IBL* 55:70) was compared with Purple Finches.

#### 1985 RECORDS NOT ACCEPTED

- Pacific Loon:** The identification was based on size. Some Common Loons appear quite small, so a detailed description of feathering is needed to substantiate a Pacific Loon.
- Trumpeter Swan:** 1 in Clay Co. in early Apr (*IBL* 55:61). This bird provoked review of the identification of immature swans. It was identified by the Regional Editor of *American Birds* as a Mute Swan (see Peterjohn, *IBL* 56:9-10).
- Eurasian Wigeon:** 3 males and 2 females in Dickinson Co. on 1 Apr 1985 (*IBL* 55:61). Non-acceptance was based on the possibility of these birds being escapees. This species usually occurs singly in the midwest. Two outside experts disagreed on the likelihood of these birds being wild.
- Ferruginous Hawk:** 1 in Cherokee Co. on 28 Mar 1985 (*IBL* 55:62) and one report from fall 1986. The first bird was not seen well enough to be sure of the identification. The second bird had many features of a Ferruginous Hawk, but immature leggings and an adult tail raised some doubt about the bird's identity. This species has presented more problems in identification than any other. The Minnesota Records Committee has experienced the same problems.
- Prairie Falcon:** 1 in O'Brien Co. on 8 Mar 1985 (*IBL* 55:62); 1 in fall in central Iowa. The date and location of the first bird suggest Prairie Falcon, but the viewer did not note black axillaries. The second bird was a light bird that could have been an immature Peregrine Falcon of the arctic race; the date and location suggest Peregrine.
- Iceland Gull:** 2 winter sightings of a white-winged gull, five days and about 15 miles apart, were suggestive of this species based on size and flight. The dark-tipped bill excluded a first-year Iceland Gull, but the field marks observed did not include any definite evidence that the bird was a second year gull. The possibility of a small, female Glaucous Gull was not entirely excluded.
- Lesser Black-backed Gull:** 1 at IPL Ponds, Pottawattamie Co., on 17 May 1986 (*IBL* 55:85). A bird briefly seen by one observer did not have a dark enough mantle for this species and would have been extremely unlikely at this location on this date.
- Wood Thrush:** A bird seen on a Christmas Count was suggestive of this species, but the details were sketchy. There are very few winter records of this species in the United States—several from the Gulf and East coasts, and one from Ohio.
- Chestnut-collared Longspur:** 1 in Story Co. on 30 Mar 1985 (*IBL* 55:70, date incorrect for this bird). The bird was seen in a high wind and identification based on tail pattern. The committee felt that a more complete view should be obtained for such a rare species and that tail patterns could be deceiving in the wind.

#### CHANGES IN THE OFFICIAL CHECKLIST OF IOWA BIRDS

The last edition of the official checklist covered birds reported through mid-1982 (*IBL* 52:67-76). In the three and one-half years since then (to the end of 1985) the list has grown by 10 species, even though one species was deleted. The number of regular species has increased by 10, and many other status changes have occurred as noted below.

*Species Added:* Pacific Loon (formerly Arctic Loon, name changed by A.O.U.), Clark's Grebe (based on 1983 record and splitting of this species from Western Grebe by A.O.U.), Bean Goose (1984-1985), Barrow's Goldeneye (1984), Black-necked Stilt (1984), Curlew Sandpiper (1985), Mew Gull (1982), Thayer's Gull (1985), Lesser Black-backed Gull (1984), *Selasphorus sp.* (1984), Vermilion Flycatcher (1983), Great-tailed Grackle (1983-1985).

*Species Deleted:* Arctic Loon (split by A.O.U., Iowa record was Pacific Loon), Laughing Gull (previous record not accepted on re-review).

*Casual to Regular:* Snowy Egret, Prairie Falcon, Yellow Rail, King Rail, Sandhill Crane, Buff-breasted Sandpiper, Bohemian Waxwing, Pine Warbler, Prairie Warbler, Lark Bunting, Sharp-tailed Sparrow.

*Accidental to Regular:* Smith's Longspur.

*Accidental to Casual:* White-faced Ibis, Black Scoter, Whimbrel, Black-legged Kittiwake, Chestnut-collared Longspur, House Finch. Also, Great-tailed Grackle enters list as Casual.

*Regular to Casual:* Say's Phoebe, Townsend's Solitaire.

*Extirpated to Accidental:* Mississippi Kite.

*To I-S (specimen):* Harlequin Duck, Scissor-tailed Flycatcher, Black-throated Blue Warbler, Blue Grosbeak.

*To I-P (photograph):* Red-throated Loon, Great Black-backed Gull, Black-backed Woodpecker, Rock Wren, Sage Thrasher, Yellow-throated Warbler.

*Nesting Confirmed:* Cattle Egret, Bufflehead, Winter Wren, Great-tailed Grackle.

*Nesting Status to Probable:* Little Blue Heron, Red Crossbill.

*Removed From Nesting Status:* Purple Finch.



# OFFICIAL CHECKLIST OF IOWA BIRDS 1986 EDITION

## I.O.U. RECORDS COMMITTEE

This list includes all records through 1985. There are 371 species on the list, up from 361 in 1982 (*IBL* 52:67-76). The designations used for status of species are given below. The number of species in each category is given in parentheses. The status of species seen in 3, 4, or 8 of the last 10 years is determined by majority vote of the Records Committee.

**Regular:** Seen every year or nearly every year, at least 8 of last 10 years (284 species).

**Casual:** Seen many years but not all, at least 3 and less than 9 of last 10 years (16 species).

**Accidental:** Seen once to several times, but less than 5 of last 10 years (64 species).

**Extirpated:** Once regular or casual, but not seen in 50 years (5 species).

**Extinct:** No longer seen anywhere (2 species).

**I-S:** Existing specimen (301 species).

**I-P:** Photograph published or on file (45 species).

**I-R:** Recording on file (1 species).

**II:** Sight record, one or more with three acceptable documentations (4 species).

**III:** Sight record, one or two with one or two acceptable documentations (20 species).

**N:** Definite evidence of having nested in the state (189 species).

**N?:** Probable evidence of nesting in the state (5 species).

### Order GAVIIFORMES

Loons, *Gaviidae*

**Red-throated Loon**, *Gavia stellata*: Accidental I-P

**Pacific Loon**, *Gavia pacifica*: Accidental I-S

**Common Loon**, *Gavia immer*: Regular I-S N

### Order PODICIPEDIFORMES

Grebes, *Podicipedidae*

**Pied-billed Grebe**, *Podilymbus podiceps*: Regular I-S N

**Horned Grebe**, *Podiceps auritus*: Regular I-S

**Red-necked Grebe**, *Podiceps grisegena*: Casual I-S

**Eared Grebe**, *Podiceps nigricollis*: Regular I-S N

**Western Grebe**, *Aechmophorus occidentalis*: Regular I-S N

**Clark's Grebe**, *Aechmophorus clarkii*: Accidental II

### Order PELECANIFORMES

Pelicans, *Pelecanidae*

**American White Pelican**, *Pelecanus erythrorhynchos*: Regular I-S N?

**Brown Pelican**, *Pelecanus occidentalis*: Accidental I-P

Cormorants, *Phalacrocoracidae*

**Double-crested Cormorant**, *Phalacrocorax auritus*: Regular I-S N

Darters, *Anhingidae*

**Anhinga**, *Anhinga anhinga*: Accidental III

## Order CICONIIFORMES

Bitterns and Herons, *Ardeidae*

**American Bittern**, *Botaurus lentiginosus*: Regular I-S N

**Least Bittern**, *Ixobrychus exilis*: Regular I-S N

**Great Blue Heron**, *Ardea herodias*: Regular I-S N

**Great Egret**, *Casmerodius albus*: Regular I-S N

**Snowy Egret**, *Egretta thula*: Regular I-S

**Little Blue Heron**, *Egretta caerulea*: Regular I-P N?

**Cattle Egret**, *Bubulcus ibis*: Regular I-S N

**Green-backed Heron**, *Butorides striatus*: Regular I-S N

**Black-crowned Night-Heron**, *Nycticorax nycticorax*: Regular I-S N

**Yellow-crowned Night-Heron**, *Nycticorax violaceus*: Regular I-S N

Ibises and Spoonbills, *Threskiornithidae*

**Ibis species**, *Plegadis sp.*: Casual I-S

**White-faced Ibis**, *Plegadis chihi*: Casual I-P

**Roseate Spoonbill**, *Ajaia ajaja*: Accidental I-P

Storks, *Ciconiidae*

**Wood Stork**, *Mycteria americana*: Accidental III

## Order ANSERIFORMES

Whistling-Ducks, Swans, Geese, and Ducks, *Anatidae*

**Tundra Swan**, *Cygnus columbianus*: Regular I-S

**Trumpeter Swan**, *Cygnus buccinator*: Extirpated I-S N

**Mute Swan**, *Cygnus olor*: Regular I-P

**Bean Goose**, *Anser fabalis*: Accidental I-P

**Greater White-fronted Goose**, *Anser albifrons*: Regular I-S

**Snow Goose**, *Chen caerulescens*: Regular I-S

**Ross' Goose**, *Chen rossii*: Regular I-S

**Brant**, *Branta bernicla*: Accidental I-S

**Canada Goose**, *Branta canadensis*: Regular I-S N

**Wood Duck**, *Aix sponsa*: Regular I-S N

**Green-winged Teal**, *Anas crecca*: Regular I-S N

**American Black Duck**, *Anas rubripes*: Regular I-S N

**Mallard**, *Anas platyrhynchos*: Regular I-S N

**Northern Pintail**, *Anas acuta*: Regular I-S N

**Blue-winged Teal**, *Anas discors*: Regular I-S N

**Cinnamon Teal**, *Anas cyanoptera*: Regular I-P

**Northern Shoveler**, *Anas chrypeata*: Regular I-S N

**Gadwall**, *Anas strepera*: Regular I-S N

**Eurasian Wigeon**, *Anas penelope*: Accidental I-S

**American Wigeon**, *Anas americana*: Regular I-S N

**Canvasback**, *Aythya valisineria*: Regular I-S N

**Redhead**, *Aythya americana*: Regular I-S N

**Ring-necked Duck**, *Aythya collaris*: Regular I-S N

**Greater Scaup**, *Aythya marila*: Regular I-S

**Lesser Scaup**, *Aythya affinis*: Regular I-S N

**Common Eider**, *Somateria mollissima*: Accidental III  
**King Eider**, *Somateria spectabilis*: Accidental I-S  
**Harlequin Duck**, *Histrionicus histrionicus*: Accidental I-S  
**Oldsquaw**, *Clangula hyemalis*: Regular I-S  
**Black Scoter**, *Melanitta nigra*: Casual I-S  
**Surf Scoter**, *Melanitta perspicillata*: Casual I-S  
**White-winged Scoter**, *Melanitta fusca*: Regular I-S  
**Common Goldeneye**, *Bucephala clangula*: Regular I-S  
**Barrow's Goldeneye**, *Bucephala islandica*: Accidental I-P  
**Bufflehead**, *Bucephala albeola*: Regular I-S N  
**Hooded Merganser**, *Lophodytes cucullatus*: Regular I-S N  
**Common Merganser**, *Mergus merganser*: Regular I-S  
**Red-breasted Merganser**, *Mergus serrator*: Regular I-S  
**Ruddy Duck**, *Oxyura jamaicensis*: Regular I-S N

## Order FALCONIFORMES

American Vultures, *Cathartidae*

**Black Vulture**, *Coragyps atratus*: Accidental I-S  
**Turkey Vulture**, *Cathartes aura*: Regular I-S N

Osprey, Kites, Harrier, and Hawks, *Accipitridae*

**Osprey**, *Pandion haliaetus*: Regular I-S  
**American Swallow-tailed Kite**, *Elanoides forficatus*: Extirpated I-S N  
**Mississippi Kite**, *Ictinia mississippiensis*: Accidental III  
**Bald Eagle**, *Haliaeetus leucocephalus*: Regular I-S N  
**Northern Harrier**, *Circus cyaneus*: Regular I-S N  
**Sharp-shinned Hawk**, *Accipiter striatus*: Regular I-S N  
**Cooper's Hawk**, *Accipiter cooperii*: Regular I-S N  
**Northern Goshawk**, *Accipiter gentilis*: Regular I-S  
**Red-shouldered Hawk**, *Buteo lineatus*: Regular I-S N  
**Broad-winged Hawk**, *Buteo platypterus*: Regular I-S N  
**Swainson's Hawk**, *Buteo swainsoni*: Regular I-S N  
**Red-tailed Hawk**, *Buteo jamaicensis*: Regular I-S N  
**Ferruginous Hawk**, *Buteo regalis*: Casual I-S  
**Rough-legged Hawk**, *Buteo lagopus*: Regular I-S  
**Golden Eagle**, *Aquila chrysaetos*: Regular I-S

Falcons, *Falconidae*

**American Kestrel**, *Falco sparverius*: Regular I-S N  
**Merlin**, *Falco columbarius*: Regular I-S N  
**Peregrine Falcon**, *Falco peregrinus*: Regular I-S N  
**Prairie Falcon**, *Falco mexicanus*: Regular I-S

## Order GALLIFORMES

Partridge, Pheasants, Grouse, Turkey, and Quail, *Phasianidae*

**Gray Partridge**, *Perdix perdix*: Regular I-S N  
**Ring-necked Pheasant**, *Phasianus colchicus*: Regular I-S N  
**Ruffed Grouse**, *Bonasa umbellus*: Regular I-S N  
**Greater Prairie-Chicken**, *Tympanuchus cupido*: Accidental I-S N  
**Sharp-tailed Grouse**, *Tympanuchus phasianellus*: Extirpated I-S  
**Wild Turkey**, *Meleagris gallopavo*: Regular I-S N  
**Northern Bobwhite**, *Colinus virginianus*: Regular I-S N



## Order GRUIFORMES

Rails, Gallinules, and Coots, *Rallidae*

- Yellow Rail**, *Coturnicops noveboracensis*: Regular I-S  
**Black Rail**, *Laterallus jamaicensis*: Accidental II  
**King Rail**, *Rallus elegans*: Regular I-S N  
**Virginia Rail**, *Rallus limicola*: Regular I-S N  
**Sora**, *Porzana carolina*: Regular I-S N  
**Purple Gallinule**, *Porphyryla martinica*: Accidental I-S  
**Common Moorhen**, *Gallinula chloropus*: Regular I-S N  
**American Coot**, *Fulica americana*: Regular I-S N

Cranes, *Gruidae*

- Sandhill Crane**, *Grus canadensis*: Regular I-S N  
**Whooping Crane**, *Grus americana*: Accidental I-S N

## Order CHARADRIIFORMES

Plovers, *Charadriidae*

- Black-bellied Plover**, *Pluvialis squatarola*: Regular I-S  
**Lesser Golden-Plover**, *Pluvialis dominica*: Regular I-S  
**Semipalmated Plover**, *Charadrius semipalmatus*: Regular I-S  
**Piping Plover**, *Charadrius melodus*: Regular I-S N  
**Killdeer**, *Charadrius vociferus*: Regular I-S N  
**Mountain Plover**, *Charadrius montanus*: Accidental III

Stilts and Avocets, *Recurvirostridae*

- Black-necked Stilt**, *Himantopus mexicanus*: Accidental I-P  
**American Avocet**, *Recurvirostra americana*: Regular I-S

Sandpipers and Phalaropes, *Scolopacidae*

- Greater Yellowlegs**, *Tringa melanoleuca*: Regular I-S  
**Lesser Yellowlegs**, *Tringa flavipes*: Regular I-S  
**Solitary Sandpiper**, *Tringa solitaria*: Regular I-S  
**Willet**, *Catoptrophorus semipalmatus*: Regular I-S  
**Spotted Sandpiper**, *Actitis macularia*: Regular I-S N  
**Upland Sandpiper**, *Bartramia longicauda*: Regular I-S N  
**Eskimo Curlew**, *Numenius borealis*: Extirpated I-S  
**Whimbrel**, *Numenius phaeopus*: Casual I-P  
**Long-billed Curlew**, *Numenius americanus*: Extirpated I-S N  
**Hudsonian Godwit**, *Limosa haemastica*: Regular I-S  
**Marbled Godwit**, *Limosa fedoa*: Regular I-S N  
**Ruddy Turnstone**, *Arenaria interpres*: Regular I-S  
**Red Knot**, *Calidris canutus*: Accidental I-S  
**Sanderling**, *Calidris alba*: Regular I-S  
**Semipalmated Sandpiper**, *Calidris pusilla*: Regular I-S  
**Western Sandpiper**, *Calidris mauri*: Regular I-S  
**Least Sandpiper**, *Calidris minutilla*: Regular I-S  
**White-rumped Sandpiper**, *Calidris fuscicollis*: Regular I-S  
**Baird's Sandpiper**, *Calidris bairdii*: Regular I-S  
**Pectoral Sandpiper**, *Calidris melanotos*: Regular I-S  
**Sharp-tailed Sandpiper**, *Calidris acuminata*: Accidental III  
**Dunlin**, *Calidris alpina*: Regular I-S  
**Curlew Sandpiper**, *Calidris ferruginea*: Accidental I-P

**Stilt Sandpiper**, *Calidris himantopus*: Regular I-S  
**Buff-breasted Sandpiper**, *Tryngites subruficollis*: Regular I-S  
**Ruff**, *Philomachus pugnax*: Accidental I-S  
**Short-billed Dowitcher**, *Limnodromus griseus*: Regular I-S  
**Long-billed Dowitcher**, *Limnodromus scolopaceus*: Regular I-S  
**Common Snipe**, *Gallinago gallinago*: Regular I-S N  
**American Woodcock**, *Scolopax minor*: Regular I-S N  
**Wilson's Phalarope**, *Phalaropus tricolor*: Regular I-S N  
**Red-necked Phalarope**, *Phalaropus lobatus*: Regular I-S

Jaegers, Gulls, and Terns, *Laridae*

**Parasitic Jaeger**, *Stercorarius parasiticus*: Accidental I-S  
**Long-tailed Jaeger**, *Stercorarius longicaudus*: Accidental I-S  
**Franklin's Gull**, *Larus pipixcan*: Regular I-S N  
**Bonaparte's Gull**, *Larus philadelphia*: Regular I-S  
**Mew Gull**, *Larus canus*: Accidental I-P  
**Ring-billed Gull**, *Larus delawarensis*: Regular I-S  
**Herring Gull**, *Larus argentatus*: Regular I-S  
**Thayer's Gull**, *Larus thayeri*: Accidental I-P  
**Lesser Black-backed Gull**, *Larus fuscus*: Accidental I-P  
**Glaucous Gull**, *Larus hyperboreus*: Regular I-P  
**Great Black-backed Gull**, *Larus marinus*: Accidental I-P  
**Black-legged Kittiwake**, *Rissa tridactyla*: Casual I-P  
**Sabine's Gull**, *Xema sabini*: Accidental I-S  
**Caspian Tern**, *Sterna caspia*: Regular I-S  
**Common Tern**, *Sterna hirundo*: Regular I-S  
**Forster's Tern**, *Sterna forsteri*: Regular I-S N  
**Least Tern**, *Sterna antillarum*: Regular I-P N  
**Black Tern**, *Chlidonias niger*: Regular I-S N

Alcids, *Alcidae*

**Thick-billed Murre**, *Uria lomvia*: Accidental III

Order COLUMBIFORMES

Pigeons and Doves, *Columbidae*

**Rock Dove**, *Columba livia*: Regular I-S N  
**Mourning Dove**, *Zenaidura macroura*: Regular I-S N  
**Passenger Pigeon**, *Ectopistes migratorius*: Extinct I-S N

Order PSITTACIFORMES

Parrots, *Psittacidae*

**Carolina Parakeet**, *Conuropsis carolinensis*: Extinct III

Order CUCULIFORMES

Cuckoos, Roadrunners, and Anis, *Cuculidae*

**Black-billed Cuckoo**, *Coccyzus erythrophthalmus*: Regular I-S N  
**Yellow-billed Cuckoo**, *Coccyzus americanus*: Regular I-S N  
**Ani species**, *Crotophaga sp.*: Accidental III

Order STRIGIFORMES

Barn-Owls, *Tytonidae*

**Common Barn-Owl**, *Tyto alba*: Regular I-S N

Typical Owls, *Strigidae*

- Eastern Screech-Owl**, *Otus asio*: Regular I-S N  
**Great Horned Owl**, *Bubo virginianus*: Regular I-S N  
**Snowy Owl**, *Nyctea scandiaca*: Regular I-S  
**Northern Hawk-Owl**, *Surnia ulula*: Accidental I-P  
**Burrowing Owl**, *Athene cunicularia*: Casual I-S N  
**Barred Owl**, *Strix varia*: Regular I-S N  
**Great Gray Owl**, *Strix nebulosa*: Accidental I-P  
**Long-eared Owl**, *Asio otus*: Regular I-S N  
**Short-eared Owl**, *Asio flammeus*: Regular I-S N  
**Northern Saw-whet Owl**, *Aegolius acadicus*: Regular I-S

Order CAPRIMULGIFORMES

Goatsuckers, *Caprimulgidae*

- Common Nighthawk**, *Chordeiles minor*: Regular I-S N  
**Chuck-will's-widow**, *Caprimulgus carolinensis*: Regular I-P N  
**Whip-poor-will**, *Caprimulgus vociferus*: Regular I-S N

Order APODIFORMES

Swifts, *Apodidae*

- Chimney Swift**, *Chaetura pelagica*: Regular I-S N

Hummingbirds, *Trochilidae*

- Ruby-throated Hummingbird**, *Archilochus colubris*: Regular I-S N  
**Selasphorus species**, *Selasphorus sp.*: Accidental I-P

Order CORACIIFORMES

Kingfishers, *Alcedinidae*

- Belted Kingfisher**, *Ceryle alcyon*: Regular I-S N

Order PICIFORMES

Woodpeckers, *Picidae*

- Lewis' Woodpecker**, *Melanerpes lewis*: Accidental III  
**Red-headed Woodpecker**, *Melanerpes erythrocephalus*: Regular I-S N  
**Red-bellied Woodpecker**, *Melanerpes carolinus*: Regular I-S N  
**Yellow-bellied Sapsucker**, *Sphyrapicus varius*: Regular I-S N  
**Downy Woodpecker**, *Picoides pubescens*: Regular I-S N  
**Hairy Woodpecker**, *Picoides villosus*: Regular I-S N  
**Three-toed Woodpecker**, *Picoides tridactylus*: Accidental III  
**Black-backed Woodpecker**, *Picoides arcticus*: Accidental III  
**Northern Flicker**, *Colaptes auratus*: Regular I-S N  
**Pileated Woodpecker**, *Dryocopus pileatus*: Regular I-S N

Order PASSERIFORMES

Tyrant Flycatchers, *Tyrannidae*

- Olive-sided Flycatcher**, *Contopus borealis*: Regular I-S  
**Western Wood-Pewee**, *Contopus sordidulus*: Accidental III  
**Eastern Wood-Pewee**, *Contopus virens*: Regular I-S N  
**Yellow-bellied Flycatcher**, *Empidonax flaviventris*: Regular I-S



**Acadian Flycatcher**, *Empidonax virescens*: Regular I-S N  
**Alder Flycatcher**, *Empidonax alnorum*: Regular I-R  
**Willow Flycatcher**, *Empidonax traillii*: Regular I-S N  
**Least Flycatcher**, *Empidonax minimus*: Regular I-S N  
**Eastern Phoebe**, *Sayornis phoebe*: Regular I-S N  
**Say's Phoebe**, *Sayornis saya*: Casual I-P N  
**Vermilion Flycatcher**, *Pyrocephalus rubinus*: Accidental I-P  
**Great Crested Flycatcher**, *Myiarchus crinitus*: Regular I-S N  
**Western Kingbird**, *Tyrannus verticalis*: Regular I-S N  
**Eastern Kingbird**, *Tyrannus tyrannus*: Regular I-S N  
**Scissor-tailed Flycatcher**, *Tyrannus forficatus*: Casual I-S N

Larks, *Alaudidae*

**Horned Lark**, *Eremophila alpestris*: Regular I-S N

Swallows, *Hirundinidae*

**Purple Martin**, *Progne subis*: Regular I-S N  
**Tree Swallow**, *Tachycineta bicolor*: Regular I-S N  
**Northern Rough-winged Swallow**, *Stelgidopteryx serripennis*: Regular I-S N  
**Bank Swallow**, *Riparia riparia*: Regular I-S N  
**Cliff Swallow**, *Hirundo pyrrhonota*: Regular I-S N  
**Barn Swallow**, *Hirundo rustica*: Regular I-S N

Jays, Magpies, and Crows, *Corvidae*

**Gray Jay**, *Perisoreus canadensis*: Accidental I-P  
**Blue Jay**, *Cyanocitta cristata*: Regular I-S N  
**Pinyon Jay**, *Gymnorhinus cyanocephalus*: Accidental III  
**Clark's Nutcracker**, *Nucifraga columbiana*: Accidental I-S  
**Black-billed Magpie**, *Pica pica*: Accidental I-S N  
**American Crow**, *Corvus brachyrhynchos*: Regular I-S N  
**Common Raven**, *Corvus corax*: Accidental I-S

Titmice, *Paridae*

**Black-capped Chickadee**, *Parus atricapillus*: Regular I-S N  
**Boreal Chickadee**, *Parus hudsonicus*: Accidental I-P  
**Tufted Titmouse**, *Parus bicolor*: Regular I-S N

Nuthatches, *Sittidae*

**Red-breasted Nuthatch**, *Sitta canadensis*: Regular I-S N  
**White-breasted Nuthatch**, *Sitta carolinensis*: Regular I-S N  
**Pygmy Nuthatch**, *Sitta pygmaea*: Accidental I-P

Creepers, *Certhiidae*

**Brown Creeper**, *Certhia americana*: Regular I-S N

Wrens, *Troglodytidae*

**Rock Wren**, *Salpinctes obsoletus*: Accidental I-P N  
**Carolina Wren**, *Thryothorus ludovicianus*: Regular I-S N  
**Bewick's Wren**, *Thryomanes bewickii*: Casual I-P N  
**House Wren**, *Troglodytes aedon*: Regular I-S N  
**Winter Wren**, *Troglodytes troglodytes*: Regular I-S N  
**Sedge Wren**, *Cistothorus platensis*: Regular I-S N  
**Marsh Wren**, *Cistothorus palustris*: Regular I-S N

Kinglets, Gnatcatchers, and Thrushes, *Muscicapidae*

**Golden-crowned Kinglet**, *Regulus satrapa*: Regular I-S

**Ruby-crowned Kinglet**, *Regulus calendula*: Regular I-S

**Blue-gray Gnatcatcher**, *Polioptila caerulea*: Regular I-S N

**Eastern Bluebird**, *Sialia sialis*: Regular I-S N

**Mountain Bluebird**, *Sialia currucoides*: Accidental I-P

**Townsend's Solitaire**, *Myadestes townsendi*: Casual I-P

**Veery**, *Catharus fuscescens*: Regular I-S N

**Gray-cheeked Thrush**, *Catharus minimus*: Regular I-S

**Swainson's Thrush**, *Catharus ustulatus*: Regular I-S

**Hermit Thrush**, *Catharus guttatus*: Regular I-S

**Wood Thrush**, *Hylocichla mustelina*: Regular I-S N

**American Robin**, *Turdus migratorius*: Regular I-S N

**Varied Thrush**, *Ixoreus naevius*: Regular I-P

Mockingbirds and Thrashers, *Mimidae*

**Gray Catbird**, *Dumetella carolinensis*: Regular I-S N

**Northern Mockingbird**, *Mimus polyglottos*: Regular I-S N

**Sage Thrasher**, *Oreoscoptes montanus*: Accidental I-P

**Brown Thrasher**, *Toxostoma rufum*: Regular I-S N

**Curve-billed Thrasher**, *Toxostoma curvirostre*: Accidental I-P

Wagtails and Pipits, *Motacillidae*

**Water Pipit**, *Anthus spinoletta*: Regular I-S

**Sprague's Pipit**, *Anthus spragueii*: Accidental III

Waxwings, *Bombycillidae*

**Bohemian Waxwing**, *Bombycilla garrulus*: Regular I-S

**Cedar Waxwing**, *Bombycilla cedrorum*: Regular I-S N

Shrikes, *Laniidae*

**Northern Shrike**, *Lanius excubitor*: Regular I-S

**Loggerhead Shrike**, *Lanius ludovicianus*: Regular I-S N

Starlings, *Sturnidae*

**European Starling**, *Sturnus vulgaris*: Regular I-S N

Vireos, *Vireonidae*

**White-eyed Vireo**, *Vireo griseus*: Regular I-P N

**Bell's Vireo**, *Vireo bellii*: Regular I-S N

**Solitary Vireo**, *Vireo solitarius*: Regular I-S

**Yellow-throated Vireo**, *Vireo flavifrons*: Regular I-S N

**Warbling Vireo**, *Vireo gilvus*: Regular I-S N

**Philadelphia Vireo**, *Vireo philadelphicus*: Regular I-S

**Red-eyed Vireo**, *Vireo olivaceus*: Regular I-S N

Wood Warblers, Tanagers, Cardinals-Grosbeaks-Buntings, Towhees-Sparrows-Longspurs, Meadowlarks-Blackbirds-Orioles, *Emberizidae*

Subfamily: Wood Warblers, *Parulinae*:

**Blue-winged Warbler**, *Vermivora pinus*: Regular I-S N

**Golden-winged Warbler**, *Vermivora chrysoptera*: Regular I-S N

**Tennessee Warbler**, *Vermivora peregrina*: Regular I-S

**Orange-crowned Warbler**, *Vermivora celata*: Regular I-S  
**Nashville Warbler**, *Vermivora ruficapilla*: Regular I-S  
**Northern Parula**, *Parula americana*: Regular I-S N?  
**Yellow Warbler**, *Dendroica petechia*: Regular I-S N  
**Chestnut-sided Warbler**, *Dendroica pensylvanica*: Regular I-S N  
**Magnolia Warbler**, *Dendroica magnolia*: Regular I-S  
**Cape May Warbler**, *Dendroica tigrina*: Regular I-S  
**Black-throated Blue Warbler**, *Dendroica caerulescens*: Regular I-S  
**Yellow-rumped Warbler**, *Dendroica coronata*: Regular I-S  
**Black-throated Gray Warbler**, *Dendroica nigrescens*: Accidental III  
**Townsend's Warbler**, *Dendroica townsendi*: Accidental III  
**Black-throated Green Warbler**, *Dendroica virens*: Regular I-S  
**Blackburnian Warbler**, *Dendroica fusca*: Regular I-S  
**Yellow-throated Warbler**, *Dendroica dominica*: Regular I-P N  
**Pine Warbler**, *Dendroica pinus*: Regular I-S  
**Prairie Warbler**, *Dendroica discolor*: Regular I-P N?  
**Palm Warbler**, *Dendroica palmarum*: Regular I-S  
**Bay-breasted Warbler**, *Dendroica castanea*: Regular I-S  
**Blackpoll Warbler**, *Dendroica striata*: Regular I-S  
**Cerulean Warbler**, *Dendroica cerulea*: Regular I-S N  
**Black-and-white Warbler**, *Mniotilta varia*: Regular I-S N  
**American Redstart**, *Setophaga ruticilla*: Regular I-S N  
**Prothonotary Warbler**, *Protonotaria citrea*: Regular I-S N  
**Worm-eating Warbler**, *Helmitheros vermivorus*: Regular I-P N  
**Ovenbird**, *Seiurus aurocapillus*: Regular I-S N  
**Northern Waterthrush**, *Seiurus noveboracensis*: Regular I-S  
**Louisiana Waterthrush**, *Seiurus motacilla*: Regular I-S N  
**Kentucky Warbler**, *Oporornis formosus*: Regular I-S N  
**Connecticut Warbler**, *Oporornis agilis*: Regular I-S  
**Mourning Warbler**, *Oporornis philadelphia*: Regular I-S  
**Common Yellowthroat**, *Geothlypis trichas*: Regular I-S N  
**Hooded Warbler**, *Wilsonia citrina*: Regular I-S N  
**Wilson's Warbler**, *Wilsonia pusilla*: Regular I-S  
**Canada Warbler**, *Wilsonia canadensis*: Regular I-S  
**Yellow-breasted Chat**, *Icteria virens*: Regular I-S N

Subfamily: Tanagers, *Thraupinae*:

**Summer Tanager**, *Piranga rubra*: Regular I-S N  
**Scarlet Tanager**, *Piranga olivacea*: Regular I-S N  
**Western Tanager**, *Piranga ludoviciana*: Accidental II

Subfamily: Cardinals, Grosbeaks, and Buntings, *Cardinalinae*:

**Northern Cardinal**, *Cardinalis cardinalis*: Regular I-S N  
**Rose-breasted Grosbeak**, *Pheucticus ludovicianus*: Regular I-S N  
**Black-headed Grosbeak**, *Pheucticus melanocephalus*: Accidental I-P  
**Blue Grosbeak**, *Guiraca caerulea*: Regular I-S N  
**Lazuli Bunting**, *Passerina amoena*: Accidental II  
**Indigo Bunting**, *Passerina cyanea*: Regular I-S N  
**Dickcissel**, *Spiza americana*: Regular I-S N

Subfamily: Towhees, Sparrows, and Longspurs, *Emberizinae*:

**Green-tailed Towhee**, *Pipilo chlorurus*: Accidental III  
**Rufous-sided Towhee**, *Pipilo erythrophthalmus*: Regular I-S N  
**American Tree Sparrow**, *Spizella arborea*: Regular I-S



**Chipping Sparrow**, *Spizella passerina*: Regular I-S N  
**Clay-colored Sparrow**, *Spizella pallida*: Regular I-S N  
**Field Sparrow**, *Spizella pusilla*: Regular I-S N  
**Vesper Sparrow**, *Pooecetes gramineus*: Regular I-S N  
**Lark Sparrow**, *Chondestes grammacus*: Regular I-S N  
**Lark Bunting**, *Calamospiza melanocorys*: Regular I-P  
**Savannah Sparrow**, *Passerculus sandwichensis*: Regular I-S N  
**Grasshopper Sparrow**, *Ammodramus savannarum*: Regular I-S N  
**Henslow's Sparrow**, *Ammodramus henslowii*: Regular I-S  
**Le Conte's Sparrow**, *Ammodramus leconteii*: Regular I-S  
**Sharp-tailed Sparrow**, *Ammodramus caudatus*: Regular I-S  
**Fox Sparrow**, *Passerella iliaca*: Regular I-S  
**Song Sparrow**, *Melospiza melodia*: Regular I-S N  
**Lincoln's Sparrow**, *Melospiza lincolnii*: Regular I-S  
**Swamp Sparrow**, *Melospiza georgiana*: Regular I-S N  
**White-throated Sparrow**, *Zonotrichia albicollis*: Regular I-S  
**Golden-crowned Sparrow**, *Zonotrichia atricapilla*: Accidental III  
**White-crowned Sparrow**, *Zonotrichia leucophrys*: Regular I-S  
**Harris' Sparrow**, *Zonotrichia querula*: Regular I-S  
**Dark-eyed Junco**, *Junco hyemalis*: Regular I-S  
**Lapland Longspur**, *Calcarius lapponicus*: Regular I-S  
**Smith's Longspur**, *Calcarius pictus*: Regular I-S  
**Chestnut-collared Longspur**, *Calcarius ornatus*: Casual III  
**Snow Bunting**, *Plectrophenax nivalis*: Regular I-S

Subfamily: Meadowlarks, Blackbirds, and Orioles, *Icterinae*:

**Bobolink**, *Dolichonyx oryzivorus*: Regular I-S N  
**Red-winged Blackbird**, *Agelaius phoeniceus*: Regular I-S N  
**Eastern Meadowlark**, *Sturnella magna*: Regular I-S N  
**Western Meadowlark**, *Sturnella neglecta*: Regular I-S N  
**Yellow-headed Blackbird**, *Xanthocephalus xanthocephalus*: Regular I-S N  
**Rusty Blackbird**, *Euphagus carolinus*: Regular I-S  
**Brewer's Blackbird**, *Euphagus cyanocephalus*: Regular I-S  
**Great-tailed Grackle**, *Quiscalus mexicanus*: Casual I-P N  
**Common Grackle**, *Quiscalus quiscula*: Regular I-S N  
**Brown-headed Cowbird**, *Molothrus ater*: Regular I-S N  
**Orchard Oriole**, *Icterus spurius*: Regular I-S N  
**Northern Oriole**, *Icterus galbula*: Regular I-S N

Finches, *Fringillidae*

**Rosy Finch**, *Leucosticte arctoa*: Accidental I-P  
**Pine Grosbeak**, *Pinicola enucleator*: Casual I-S  
**Purple Finch**, *Carpodacus purpureus*: Regular I-S  
**House Finch**, *Carpodacus mexicanus*: Casual I-P  
**Red Crossbill**, *Loxia curvirostra*: Regular I-S N?  
**White-winged Crossbill**, *Loxia leucoptera*: Regular I-S  
**Common Redpoll**, *Carduelis flammea*: Regular I-S  
**Hoary Redpoll**, *Carduelis hornemanni*: Accidental I-P  
**Pine Siskin**, *Carduelis pinus*: Regular I-S N  
**American Goldfinch**, *Carduelis tristis*: Regular I-S N  
**Evening Grosbeak**, *Coccothraustes vespertinus*: Regular I-S

Weaver-Finches, *Passeridae*

**House Sparrow**, *Passer domesticus*: Regular I-S N

# FIELD REPORTS—WINTER 1985-1986

W. ROSS SILCOCK

## WEATHER

The three-month period embodied all the variances of a typical Iowa winter: frigid weather and deep snow in December; warm, dry, sunny weather in January; and quite normal temperatures and precipitation in February.

December averaged 12° F colder than normal, making it the third coldest December in Iowa in 113 years. With 13.7 inches (more than twice the normal 6.6 inches) of snow, this was the sixth snowiest December on record. Much of the snow fell during the worst twentieth century blizzard, which ended on 2 December. This blizzard extended from some south central counties to northeastern Iowa, where Dubuque reported the heaviest snowstorm on record. During this storm, winds gusted over 40 miles per hour and temperatures produced wind chills down to -80° F. The severe coldness of December (average temperature of 12.2° F), together with that of November, made this the second coldest two-month period on record, exceeded only in 1880. December's coldest temperature was -32° F at Grinnell on the 19th. The coldest day across the state was on the 18th with average lows at -18°, and highs of 1°.

January 1986 was dry, sunny, and warm and vied with January 1983 as Iowa's warmest in over 20 years. Temperatures were about 7° F warmer than normal and approximated those of the average February. Except for a few days, daily temperatures were consistently above normal. The coldest day was the 7th, over the whole state except for a few easternmost counties. Elkader and Fayette at -27° had the lows for the month, while Glenwood at 64° and Sidney at 63° were the warmest spots. January precipitation, mostly in the form of snow, was about 3 inches statewide, the least since 1981 and 1954.

Extremely variable weather patterns typified February also. The month began unseasonably mild, then turned bitterly cold. The balance of the month was alternately colder and then warmer than usual. Lows were recorded at Oelwein and Atlantic (-24° F on the 12th), and highs were 63° at Sioux City and 61° at Le Mars on the 25th. Precipitation was 25 percent greater than normal, with snowfall averaging 6.7 inches. Snow cover receded during the month and, at month's end, was quite normal. No major storms occurred during the month. (Weather data prepared by Jim Sandrock.)

## GENERAL TRENDS

The extremely cold November and December caused most water-dependent species to leave the state. Bob Cecil detected attempts at returning to southeast Iowa during the mild weather in January, but these attempts were snuffed out when cold weather returned in February. Late February was marked by the return of expected early species, such as ducks, geese, killdeer, bluebirds, and robins. As noted in the Christmas Bird Count report, Northern Shrikes and Evening Grosbeaks appeared in record numbers. This year's prize for the strangest occurrence was a report from





Barb Wilson of a Muscovy Duck perched on a martin house in Mills Co. Does this mean that Muscovys will become established if there are sufficient nesting sites?

## UNUSUAL SIGHTINGS

Accidental species included Thayer's Gull (accepted by the Records Committee and first state record) and Black-backed Woodpecker (*IBL* 56:30). Casual species included a House Finch on the Davenport CBC and Pine Grosbeak on the Cedar Falls CBC. Other interesting birds included a Mute Swan at Cedar Rapids (whose wildness has been questioned), several Prairie Falcons, several Glaucous Gulls, Townsend's Solitaire, the now-expected Varied Thrushes, a few Bohemian Waxwings, a possible first winter specimen for Eastern Meadowlark, and a few crossbills of each species. Desperately out-of-season birds included a Horned Grebe in Madison Co. in February (rescued from a chicken coop) and a Sora found on the Muscatine CBC. The only exotic of note was an injured Trumpeter Swan from the captive population in Hennepin County, Minnesota.

## SPECIES DATA (\* documented)

In the species summaries below, late dates will not be mentioned unless they are later than dates for the same species recorded on CBCs.

**Common Loon:** One spent Christmas and New Year's (21 Dec to 6 Jan) on the Iowa R. at Iowa City (\*THK, JF, TJS) setting a record late date.

**Horned Grebe:** A farmer found one in his chicken coop on 12 Feb in Madison Co. It was warmed up for two days and set free on 14 Feb on the Middle R. (Jim Leichty fide EIA, EuA).

**Great Blue Heron:** The only Jan report was one at Rathbun Res. on 19 Jan (TNJ).

**Trumpeter Swan:** The only report was an injured bird picked up near Newton (date not given) and now under rehabilitation at Iowa State University (JJD). This bird had a colored neck-collar indicating that it was from the captive population in Hennepin Co., Minnesota.

**Mute Swan:** The only report was the immature that appeared at Cedar Rapids for the CBC. It was photographed (THK, \*MBro) and acted rather like a tame bird.

**Swan sp.:** Observers are beginning to take more care identifying swans in Iowa. If reports do not state clearly why the swan was not a Mute or Trumpeter, it will be considered Swan sp. Identification is often difficult, such as the one reported as Swan sp. seen flying over Davenport 30 Jan (Jean Moeller fide PCP). The several swans at DeSoto NWR during December were unfortunately not critically studied, and were assumed to be Tundras. No convincing documentation to this effect was received, however.

**Canada Goose:** The only Jan reports were of 12 at Brown's Lake near Sioux City on 25 Jan (KD), probably wintering, and 75 in Lee Co. on 26 Jan, which may have been wandering around as the weather warmed up (RCe).

**Snow Goose:** This was the first winter in several years that Snow Geese left Iowa and stayed away all winter. None were reported in southwest Iowa until 28 Feb (BLW), unusually late considering that the peak migration is about 10 Mar. The cold fall probably caused these birds to winter further south than usual.

**Wood Duck:** A few apparently overwintered. One was in Boone Co. from 1 to 5 Jan (SD), and several wintered with the usual wintering flock of Mallards near Rock Valley (JV).

**American Black Duck:** Unusual locations for wintering birds were Tieg's Marsh, where two were seen on 13 Jan (SD, EM), and Snyder Bend in Woodbury Co., where one was seen 10 Jan (BH).

**Mallard:** Concentrations of wintering birds were far smaller than usual; the highest number was 1,500 at Brown's Lake near Sioux City (KD). Smaller wintering groups were scattered around the state, but the last large concentration was the 25,000 at DeSoto NWR in late December.



- Gadwall:** An unusual winter record was provided by 4 at Brown's Lake on 19 Jan (KD).
- Blue-winged Teal:** No description was provided for a male reported as being "very early" at Snyder Bend (BL). Most do not arrive until late March.
- Canvasback:** Cecil provided interesting data on Canvasback movements this winter near Keokuk. The first were 10 on 16 Jan, and 800 were present by 21 Jan. Cold weather apparently caused their absence from 5 to 26 Feb, but 4,000 were again present on 28 Feb. Is there north-south movement on the Mississippi R., depending on ice conditions? A single bird wintered on the Chariton R. in Appanoose Co. (RLC).
- Ring-necked Duck:** There were 100 in Lee Co. on 24 Jan (RCe), presumably returning with the Canvasbacks. A late male was at Le Claire on 28 Dec (PCP).
- Lesser Scaup:** Similar movements of this species and Canvasbacks were noted by Cecil near Keokuk on the Mississippi R. A buildup began with 13 on 17 Jan, peaking at 1,300 on 5 Feb, but these did not stay long. The expected beginning of migration occurred in late Feb, with 2,500 present on 28 Feb. Wintering singles at other locations were on the Des Moines R. in Polk Co. on 28 Dec (RLC), and below Saylorville Dam (BE). A flock of 85 was at Lock and Dam 16 on 28 Jan (GDW), part of the late January influx as noted at Keokuk.
- Oldsquaw:** 1 was on the Mississippi R. near Burlington on 9 Feb (CF, JF).
- White-winged Scoter:** A late report was of 2 shot at Riverton A. in Fremont Co. on 11 Nov. (Paul Seeper fide JJD).
- Bald Eagle:** This species has become one of Iowa's common winter raptors, with individuals and small groups reported statewide. Largest concentrations are along the Mississippi R., where 254 were counted along 55 miles on 15 Feb (Elton Fawks, Kelly McKay fide PCP).
- Northern Goshawk:** There were about 30 sightings of this species statewide, involving about equal numbers of adults and immatures. In some areas, such as around Rathbun Res. (RLC), Goshawks were the most common accipiter. Perhaps the cold early winter forced these birds to winter further south than usual. Most immatures were carefully described, but reliance on size, without some indication of shape (heavy body, etc.), can be misleading. Especially unconvincing are descriptions of birds "24-25 inches long," seen in flight.
- Broad-winged Hawk:** The 300 reported in Story Co. on 27 May 1985 were actually seen on 27 Apr (BPr, IBL 55:62).
- Ferruginous Hawk:** A report of this species was referred to the Records Committee.
- Golden Eagle:** There was one report away from northeast Iowa, that of an immature below the Saylorville Dam (\*BE).
- Merlin:** There were several reports of singles in addition to the CBC sightings, all fairly well described: Cherokee Co. on 2 Jan (\*MMB), Ainsworth on 15 Jan (\*JF), Ames on 22 Jan (\*PM), and Hendrickson M. on 26 Feb (\*PM).
- Prairie Falcon:** In addition to CBC reports, 3 were seen, all well-described and from western Iowa: Sioux Co. on 3 Jan (\*JV), Mills Co. on 17 Jan (\*BLW), and Humboldt Co. on 30 Jan (\*Danny Gittard fide JJD).
- Gray Partridge:** This species continues to expand its range, now as far south as Burlington, where 10 were seen on 21 Dec (JF). They were considered "very common" in Story Co. (SD), and Dennis Thompson saw his first for Polk Co. on 8 Dec, a flock of 10 near Saylorville Res. dam.
- Wild Turkey:** Also doing very well statewide. A first record for Oak Grove P. in Sioux Co. was thought to be of birds from South Dakota (JV).
- Northern Bobwhite:** Bobwhites are apparently struggling at the edges of their range, with only small coveys seen in Madison Co. (EuA, EA), and none found in Sioux Co. (JV).
- Sora:** 1 found on the Muscatine CBC on 29 Dec (Kelly McKay fide PCP) is the first winter record for Iowa.
- Killdeer:** Two reports of wintering birds, unexpected after the cold fall, were received: 1 was seen throughout the period at Snyder Bend (KD, BL, BH), and another was wintering in a stream in Allamakee Co. (FL). The first spring migrants appeared in late February (BLW, JF).

- Ring-billed Gull:** No Ring-bills were reported on the CBCs for the first time in ten years. One, however, was at Lock and Dam 15 on 3 Jan (PCP), and 4 were in Lee Co. from 21 to 29 Jan (RCe). By 26 Feb there were 100 in Lee Co. (RCe).
- Herring Gull:** These were very scarce this winter. The only Jan reports were from Lee Co. 16 and 17 Jan (RCe).
- Thayer's Gull:** A first-year bird at Red Rock Res. from 10 to 14 Dec (\*CJB, \*THK, \*MPPr, \*DT, \*RKM, \*FLM) was photographed and accepted by the Records Committee.
- Iceland Gull:** Two reports from eastern Iowa were referred to the Records Committee.
- Glaucous Gull:** There were about six Glaucous Gulls reported this winter. Two immatures were at Red Rock Res. from 9 to 14 Dec, where they provided helpful comparisons with the reported Thayer's Gull (\*MPPr, THK, m.ob.). There were three immatures near Lock and Dam 15 during late December and into January (\*THK) and an adult was reported there on 17 Jan. This latter sighting was not accompanied by details, and would be unusual. Finally, an immature was at Montrose in Lee Co. 17 Jan (RCe).
- Mourning Dove:** Despite the severity of the early winter, a few remained, such as the "forlorn" five on 3 Jan in Sioux Co. (JV), and the 32 seen on 8 Jan in Iowa City (TJS).
- Great Horned Owl:** Birds of the arctic race were reported from Perry on 6 Dec (RKM) and Indianola on 21 Dec (JSi).
- Snowy Owl:** The three reports involved one on the Swaledale CBC, an adult near Larchwood 15 Dec (Bill Fribley fide DCH), and an immature at Big Creek S.P. on 13 Jan (\*SD).
- Northern Saw-Whet Owl:** The usual wintering birds were discovered, mainly in the central Iowa locations where observers know how and where to look. A surprising 16 were found in Boone Co., all in cedars, except for one in a white pine (SD). One in Boone Co. on 1 Jan approached in response to a Screech Owl tape (EM).
- Red-bellied Woodpecker:** This species is "doing well" at the northwest edge of its range along the Big Sioux and Rock Rivers (JV).
- American Crow:** The roost on the Iowa State University campus contained more birds than in recent years, with 2,500 birds in late Feb (JJD), but it was dwarfed by the Keokuk roost of 25,000 birds (RCe).
- Black-capped Chickadee:** Barb Wilson netted an unusual individual at Willow Sl. in Mills Co. The bird was sooty gray all over, with just a few white feathers where the white cheeks usually are.
- Red-breasted Nuthatch:** CBC data indicated an average year, but in Sioux Co. they were noticeably common, "some places as common as White-breasted" (JV).
- Brown Creeper:** 1 reported as 20 Aug 1985 (*IBL* 55:127) was actually seen on 2 Aug (RCe).
- Golden-crowned Kinglet:** These were present in above average numbers near Ames, where 21 were found (EM). Only 49 were recorded from the 42 CBC locations.
- Ruby-crowned Kinglet:** None were reported on the CBCs, but singles were at Ames on 13 Dec and 11 Feb (SD).
- Carolina Wren:** 1 wintered in Madison Co. (EIA, EuA), and only 4 were found on the CBCs.
- Townsend's Solitaire:** There was one report of this species, with excellent details, in a juniper grove in extreme northwest Sioux Co. on 23 Dec (Ken Hollinga and Dan Rankeing fide JV).
- Eastern Bluebird:** Scattered wintering birds were reported, with the first spring arrivals noted in late February.
- Hermit Thrush:** The usual scattered wintering birds were reported, with 2 birds in addition to those found on CBCs: Polk Co. on 28 Dec (RLC) and Boone Co. on 23 Feb (SD).
- American Robin:** Robins remained in good numbers statewide, although the largest numbers were in the Missouri valley. A large group of 300 was near the Coralville Res. on 6 Dec (JF), and eight were huddled over steam pipes in Ames on 10 Jan (HZ). This was a good winter for fruit-eaters, with waxwings present in good numbers also.
- Varied Thrush:** 1 was at a Des Moines feeder all winter (mid-Nov to mid-Feb) and seen by many (\*MPPr); another stayed a few days at a Cedar Rapids feeder (until 29 Nov) and was photographed (MBro).



- Bohemian Waxwing:** Far fewer were reported than in last year's mini-invasion, even though Cedar Waxwings were present in good numbers. A flock of 8 was found on 30 Dec in northwest Iowa (Mike Olsen fide DCH), and singles were at Glendale Cemetery on 8 Dec (\*DT), and at Iowa City, where one stayed the last half of December (\*TJS, \*JF).
- Cedar Waxwing:** CBC data indicated a good year for this species, as for the other expected fruit-eater, American Robin.
- Northern Shrike:** This was an invasion year for this species, which appeared in record numbers. Most were in the northern two-thirds of the state, but there were documented records as far south as Guthrie Co. (\*RLC), and Iowa City (\*THK, \*TJS). A winter raptor survey in Fayette Co. yielded 19 Northern Shrikes and one Loggerhead (WD).
- Loggerhead Shrike:** This species was present in normal numbers in the usual areas, primarily the southern third of the state. This was surprising in light of the large number of Northern Shrikes. If the influx of Northerns was simply the result of cold weather, one would have expected Loggerheads to have moved out of the state. Hence, the influx of Northerns probably resulted from food shortage or other cause. The Loggerhead Shrike found in Fayette Co. 20 Dec was unusually far north (\*WD).
- Northern Cardinal:** John Van Dyk noticed that Cardinals were very common in western Sioux Co. in December, but declined in Jan and Feb. Was this due to late winter mortality at this northwest edge of the species' range, or do these birds move around to some extent?
- Vesper Sparrow:** One was reported at a feeder until early Jan in central Iowa, but no details were provided. None were reported on the CBCs. This species is not expected to occur in Iowa in winter.
- Lincoln's Sparrow:** Only two were reported this winter, both on the Sioux City CBC at Snyder Bend (\*BH). A few can be found in Iowa most winters, but this location is unusually far north.
- Fox Sparrow:** The usual scattered wintering individuals were reported, perhaps those most often seen being the two wintering at a feeder adjacent to Glendale Cemetery in Des Moines (EuA, EIA, JF, RDM).
- White-throated Sparrow:** This species may occur in Iowa in winter on occasion, but not often as far north as central Iowa, where 1 to 6 wintered in Boone Co. (SD), and 6 were found along the Des Moines River north of Saylorville on 1 Feb (RDM).
- White-crowned Sparrow:** Observers in central Iowa considered this species to be present in unusually good numbers.
- Harris' Sparrow:** Some central Iowa observers found this species in good numbers, but in western Iowa, its usual range in the state, it was rather scarce (JV, BLW). CBC data indicated below average numbers statewide.
- Dark-eyed Junco:** Barb Wilson found the same sooty-bodied bird with narrow, well-defined wing bars that was present at her Mills Co. feeder last year. This bird, together with a strange chickadee and a Muscovy Duck perched on a martin house, cause for one to wonder what the future holds for humans in southwest Iowa.
- Snow Bunting:** Record numbers were reported, especially in the northern part of the state. Flocks of 2,000 in Story Co. on 4 Jan (EM) and 1,600 in Hamilton Co. on 8 Dec (SD) were not unusual this year.
- Lapland Longspur:** This species appeared in near record numbers this winter, with large flocks reported from the northern parts of the state. Over 2,000 were seen near Sibley in Osceola Co. on 27 Feb (DCH), and 2,500 were found in Boone Co. on 27 Feb (SD). As suggested by Steve Dinsmore, these large late February flocks probably consist of migrants.
- Smith's Longspur:** The only report was of 12 well-described birds seen in Boone Co. on 27 Feb (\*SD).
- Eastern Meadowlark:** The importance of collecting road-killed birds and giving them to recognized collections was emphasized by the discovery of two Eastern Meadowlark specimens. One was found in Tama Co. on 6 Dec (NK) and the other east of Tama on 5 Jan (Darwin Koenig fide JJD). If the identifications are correct, the latter specimen may provide the first documented winter record for Iowa (for this species, "winter" means January and the first half of February).



**Red-winged Blackbird:** In the "hope springs eternal" category was a male staking out a territory on a wire over a frozen marsh in Lee Co. on 26 Feb (RCe). Wintering Red-wings were far fewer than usual, so 15 wintering along the Rock River in Sioux Co. were unexpected (JV).

**Yellow-headed Blackbird:** Two males were found on 21 Dec at Snyder Bend (JP). This species has been found in western and southern Iowa in Dec in 7 of the last 8 years.

**Orchard Oriole:** A late report was of one killed at a Hinton tower on 22 Sep (SD). This is the latest Iowa record by 13 days.

**Purple Finch:** CBC data indicated a very good year for this species, although only observers in northwest Iowa indicated unusually high numbers.

**House Finch:** 1 was reported at a Davenport feeder during the Davenport CBC.

**Common Redpoll:** This species appeared in relatively good numbers statewide. It was found in large numbers in some locations, such as 175 in Boone Co. on 13 Jan (SD) and several hundred over Oak Grove P. (JV).

**Pine Grosbeak:** Only one was reported, a female found on the Cedar Falls CBC on 22 Dec (\*FLM).

**Red Crossbill:** 4 were in the State Forest nursery at Ames 14 Dec (SD), and 3 females were recorded on the Cedar Falls CBC on 22 Dec (FLM). In contrast with last year, this was an average to slow year for crossbills.

**White-winged Crossbill:** One was at a Burlington feeder from 14 to 23 Dec and again from 26 to 28 Feb (CF, JanF, JF), and 3 were found in Black Hawk Co. on 8 Dec (FLM). These were the only reports.

**Pine Siskin:** CBC data indicated that this was the best year in the last ten for Pine Siskins. Few observers, however, mentioned them in their field reports.

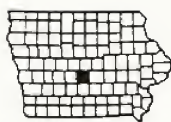
**Evening Grosbeak:** As mentioned above, this was a great year for this species, with by far the most found on CBCs for the last ten years. Many observers mentioned them, with feeders throughout the state being patronized by flocks of Evening Grosbeaks. The largest number reported was the 24 at the Felsing feeder in Marion Co. (JSi).

#### CONTRIBUTORS (\* documentation only)

Cynthia Andera (Fayette); Eloise Armstrong (Booneville); Eugene Armstrong (Booneville); \*Carl J. Bendorf (Iowa City); Marion M. Brewer (Cherokee); \*Mark Brogie (Creighton, NE); Robert Cecil (Keokuk); \*Elizabeth Christiansen (Burlington); Raymond L. Cummins (Centerville); Kurt Dean (Dakota City, SD); \*Mark Dietzenbach (St. Lucas); James J. Dinsmore (Ames); Steve Dinsmore (Ames); Bery Engbreetsen (Johnston); Charles Fuller (Burlington); Jane Fuller (Burlington); Jim Fuller (Iowa City); Ronald V. Harms (Laurens); Douglas C. Harr (Larchwood); \*Willis M. Heusinkveld (Centerville); Bill Huser (S. Sioux City, NE); Thomas N. Johnson (Centerville); Jack Jones (Sioux City); Thomas H. Kent (Iowa City); Nick Kubek (Tama); Fred Leshner (La Crosse, WI); Bob Livermore (Sioux City); Paul Martsching (Ames); Robert K. Myers (Perry); Francis L. Moore (Waterloo); Eric Munson (Ames); Peter C. Petersen (Davenport); Diane Porter (Fairfield); Jerry Probst (Sioux City); Beth Proescholdt (Liscomb); Mark Proescholdt (Liscomb); Conrad Schlemmer (Council Bluffs); Jim Sinclair (Indianola); Thomas J. Staudt (Iowa City); Dale Stone (Hinton); Carol Thompson (Iowa City); \*Dennis Thompson (Des Moines); Bob Towner (Iowa City); John Van Dyk (Sioux Center); David Wehde (Fayette); Gerald D. White (Muscatine); \*Pete Wickham (Cedar Rapids); Randy Williams (Sioux City); Barbara L. Wilson (Hastings); and Hank Zaletel (Colo).

## RED-THROATED LOON AT SAYLORVILLE RESERVOIR

STEVE DINSMORE

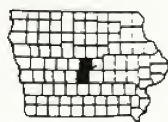


At 11:00 a.m. on 30 November 1985, while birding the Saylorville Reservoir in Polk County, I noticed a small loon swimming with several Common Goldeneyes in a narrow strip of open water. I watched the bird until 1:00 p.m. The bird was slightly larger than a Common Goldeneye, but much slimmer. The throat and underparts were all white. The back was black with some white spots visible on the sides. The nape and crown were also black. This black color included the eye, with the remainder of the cheek being white. The forehead was smooth and rounded, not abrupt like that of a Common Loon. The bill was dark, thin, short, and slightly upturned. The bird also held its head tilted slightly upward. From these marks, I identified the bird as a winter-plumaged Red-throated Loon. I then notified Bob Myers of Perry, and we watched the bird until 2:15 p.m. To my knowledge, the bird was not found on later dates. This represents the fifth sighting of a Red-throated Loon in Iowa.

*4024 Arkansas Dr., Ames IA 50010*

## RED-NECKED GREBES IN CENTRAL IOWA

STEVE DINSMORE



At 12:30 p.m., on 19 October 1985, while scanning a quarry north of Ames, I noticed four large, grebe-like birds swimming together near a single Ruddy Duck. The birds were slightly larger than the Ruddy Duck, with much larger heads and longer necks. All of the birds had white underparts, a white throat, and a dark back and crown. One bird still had quite a bit of rufous on its neck and shoulders. Another bird was similar to the first bird, but lacked the rufous color. The remaining two birds were probably young birds, for they each had some striping on the cheek. In other respects, they were similar to the second bird. From these marks I identified the birds as a family group of Red-necked Grebes. This record represents the largest number of Red-necked Grebes ever seen in Iowa and the first family group ever reported. These birds were seen later that afternoon by Jim Dinsmore, Erik Munson, and Paul Martsching, all of Ames, and by Hank and Linda Zaletel of Colo. The birds were not present the next morning.

The next morning, 20 October, Jim Sinclair and I found a winter-plumaged Red-necked Grebe at Big Creek S.P. in Polk County. After we had watched it for several minutes, the bird suddenly flew, and we were able to see the diagnostic white patches on the leading and trailing edges of the wing.

On 21 October, Bob Myers of Perry found another winter-plumaged Red-necked Grebe near the marina at Saylorville Reservoir. It is possible that this was the same bird that was seen at Big Creek S.P., since these locations are less than two miles apart.

On 26 October, Bob Myers and Francis Moore found yet another winter-plumaged Red-necked Grebe above the dam of the Saylorville Reservoir. This was probably a different bird from the one found earlier near the marina—there were very few birds at the reservoir on the 23 October, but many new birds had arrived by 26 October. This bird had most likely arrived with the latter birds.

On 3 November, Dennis Thompson and I found two more winter-plumaged Red-necked Grebes above the dam of the Saylorville Reservoir. These were probably different birds, for very few birds were present on 1 November, but lots of birds were present on 3 November.

Finally, on 7 November, I found another Red-necked Grebe at the Cherry Glen Recreation Area on the east side of the Saylorville Reservoir. As I watched the bird at a distance of about 100 feet, I noticed that the bird still had some rufous on its neck. I am sure that this bird represents a different individual, since none of the other Saylorville birds showed any rufous coloration.

I find it interesting that these six records of Red-necked Grebes in central Iowa almost double the existing fall records for this species in Iowa. Increased observer awareness and the increasing use of the large reservoirs by water birds, especially loons and grebes, probably account for the numerous reports of Red-necked Grebes this fall. In summary, I believe that there were eight or nine different Red-necked Grebes observed in central Iowa this fall.

*4024 Arkansas Dr., Ames IA 50010*

## RED KNOT IN POLK COUNTY

STEVE DINSMORE



At 4 p.m. on 19 September 1985 I found a Red Knot at Fisher's Lake in Polk County. The large size as compared to a Sanderling, plump appearance, gray back, white underparts, and short, black, slightly drooped bill led to the identification. The bird also showed a prominent white wing stripe when it raised its wings. Light edging on the scapulars indicated that the bird was in juvenal plumage. The bird was similar to the bird I found at Hendrickson Marsh in 1984. While under observation, the bird fed continuously with several Long-billed Dowitchers. After these initial observations, I contacted Bob Myers of Perry, and we watched the bird until sunset. Eugene and Eloise Armstrong found the bird early the next morning, but Jim Sinclair could not locate the bird later that afternoon. This represents the fifth sighting of Red Knot in Iowa and the third in two years. All of the recent records fall between 10 and 19 September.

*4024 Arkansas Drive, Ames, IA 50010*



## RUFF IN STORY COUNTY

PAUL MARTSCHING



On the afternoon of 1 September 1984 I was birding Hendrickson Marsh. Along the south side I met Mark Proescholdt; he told me that there was a large sandpiper among the Pectoral Sandpipers on the west shore. My first impression of the bird was 'giant pectoral.' It was one-third longer than the largest pectoral and had a more erect posture. The bird preened for 15 minutes while standing in shallow water along a mud flat. The legs were dull green. The bill was dark and shaped and proportioned to the head like a pectoral's bill. The scaly back was composed of dark brown feathers with light brown edges. The breast was light gray-brown fading to white on the belly. The light gray-brown head had fine dark streaks from the base of the bill to the top of the head and fading down the back of the neck. I flushed the bird; as it landed going straight away from me, I saw a distinct white V on the rump pointing down the tail. Back at the car, a perusal of field guides (Peterson 1980, Robbins, Bruun, and Zim 1966) seemed to confirm my impression of Ruff, but both field guides mentioned large white ovals on either side of the tail. This was somewhat discouraging in light of the distinct white V I had seen. As I prepared to return for another look, Hank Zaletel arrived. We could not relocate the bird. We met Mark and Beth Proescholdt on the way out and looked at their field guide (National Geographic Society 1983) which stated "In flight (page 139), U-shaped white band on rump is distinctive in all plumages." Mark and Beth found the bird again, but only one observer found it the next day, late in the day. This is the third Iowa record for Ruff. One of the others was also a juvenile and found in September; the other was a spring female (Dinsmore et al., 1984, *Iowa Birds*).

*1120 Marston, Ames, IA 50010*